For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

—Psalm 51:16–17
SESSION FOUR AUDIO MESSAGES:

4a. Peacemakers
4b. The Prophets Before You

Lessons are to be distributed from the Training Center only, please.

ANSWER KEY TO LAST SESSION'S SELF TEST QUESTIONS:

CHAPTER FIVE. The Peril of Religious Flesh
1.d, 2.d, 3.b, 4.d, 5.c, 6.d, 7.d, 8.b.

CHAPTER SIX. The Land Beneath Our Feet
1.b, 2.c, 3.d, 4.d, 5.c, 6.b, 7.c, 8.d.
SESSION FOUR. THE SACRIFICES OF GOD: A BROKEN AND CONTRITE HEART

CHAPTER SEVEN

BROKENNESS
CREATES OPENNESS

Up until the moment Christ enters our lives, surrounding our souls there exists a hard outer shell, a “survival nature,” which protects us against life’s harshest offenses. This shell is necessary while we are in the world, but becomes an enemy to our new life in Christ, where the nature of Christ becomes our shelter. Thus, as the shell of a seed, a nut or an egg must be broken before its inner life comes forth, so it is with us: the shell of our outer nature must also break in order to free the Spirit of Christ to arise in our hearts.

This need to be broken is recorded in Luke 20. Jesus Christ described Himself as the very cornerstone and source of life itself. Yet, as such, He also said that He was, “The stone which the builders rejected” (v. 17). Even though we say we believe in Him, yet how often we reject the wisdom of His words when we build our lives! This self-sufficiency and self will is what must break before we can ever fulfill the will of God, which is Christlikeness. It is only because we are still unbroken that we trust the ways of men rather than God.
Yet Jesus warned, “Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust” (Luke 20:18). He is saying that, ultimately, only two types of people will remain: the broken and those scattered like dust. Only the broken can survive the coming glory of God. We either fall and break on Christ or He will fall upon us and scatter us like dust.

God brings low those He plans to use. Consider our spiritual heroes: Joseph, Moses, David. Each suffered an extended time of wounding and breaking until they became low enough for God to raise them up. Or consider the early disciples: they enjoyed limited success working with Jesus, but in His most crucial hour they all failed Him. Even the inner circle of Peter, James and John failed the Lord. They slept at a time when Jesus desperately needed their prayer and companionship. In cowardice, they denied they ever knew Him. Yet their failure did not disqualify them. Amazingly, because God used their failure to produce humility, they received qualifying grace. On Pentecost, God raised them up in power to represent the risen Christ!

Failure functionalizes our capacity to live more perfectly dependent on Christ. It causes us to more genuinely rely upon the Lord for wisdom, virtue and strength. It cripples our strength, turning the heart away from itself. We learn to fall upon Christ and, though broken to pieces, the Son of God can now flow out through us to others.

Sin is not our worst enemy; worse than sin is “self.” Thus, as a hammer is to the shell of a walnut, so are our mistakes in the hands of our Heavenly Father; God uses them to unlock our spiritual inner nature. On the other hand, if we do not bring our failures to God in humility and repentance, they actually cause the opposite effect: they can create a thicker outer hardness. We may become cynical and angry, blaming others for our
difficulties. If we do not see the Lord orchestrating our circumstances, we become entombed in our humanity, never able to see the true life of Christ emerge through us.

Let me also clarify that the Lord said that He would not break “a bruised reed” (Isa. 42:3). For those who come to Him devastated by tragedy, Jesus immediately seeks to bring healing. God’s goal in all things is to create within us dependency upon Him. We either come with brokenness or He will supply it.

**Wheat and Tares**

Another means of breaking comes in how we deal with offenses. We live in an imperfect world for a reason: God seeks to perfect character here. In Matthew 13, Jesus explained that two types of people grow side by side in the kingdom: one He called “wheat” and the other “tares.” He sowed wheat, but an enemy came later and sowed tares. Until the harvest, the appearance of tares is quite similar to wheat. Thus, when asked if the tares should be uprooted, the farmer (Jesus) said, “No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest” (vv. 29–30).

Why will Jesus let wheat and tares grow side by side? Tares *perfect the character of the wheat.* Why wait until the harvest? Because it is only then that the difference between wheat and tares becomes evident. At harvest, the wheat head, full of mature grain, bows, while the tares remain stiff and unbending. The contrast is plain: the bowed versus the unbowed; the humble versus the stiff-necked.

This parable also tells us that we have no right to judge, uproot or even try to “discern” the tares before the harvest time; even Jesus will not remove them until then. The question we need to ask is
not, “Who is a tare?” but, “Am I truly a wheat?” Remember, prior to the harvest, the differences, outwardly, are indistinguishable. In fact, both survive the storms, droughts and blights that strike each equally. Yet one produces grain, while the other is barren; one becomes valuable, while the other is gathered to be burned.

God allows the tares to grow side by side with the wheat to perfect Christlikeness in the wheat. When offended, the wheat humbly forgives; when faced with conflict or failure, the wheat does not blame others. In fact, the wheat does not even judge the tares – it prays for them. That’s how you know you are a wheat. On the other hand, the tares cannot deal with the imperfections of the wheat; they judge the wheat and other tares as well. They become angry, bitter at life and easily offended. They are the unbroken. You know you are becoming a tare if, instead of interceding for the imperfections of people around you, you simply criticize them. If you carry offenses from years ago and still blame people for your failure, you are avoiding the wheat, you are becoming a tare. At its essence, the difference between the wheat and tares is the measure of love functioning in each; the wheat is able to truly bow to its Creator.

Let’s pray: Lord Jesus, I see and abhor my old nature. I shun the prison of a hardened heart. I choose to fall upon You. May I remain broken so You don’t have to break me. May I minister to the tares as You did as a Friend of sinners.

—from the ICIT Weekly Mailer

SELF TEST, CHAPTER SEVEN

Remember, we are looking for answers that correspond with this training. Please write out your answers, allowing the Holy Spirit to provoke your thoughts. You may want to use them for group discussion. Note: we do not provide answers to questions you write out. To check your multiple choice answers, see answer key in the next session.
1. In our new life in Christ, the nature of Christ becomes our shelter. The shell that had surrounded our souls:
   a. becomes thicker
   b. must be broken
   c. will not crack under pressure
   d. becomes impenetrable

2. It is only because we are still unbroken that we trust the ways of:
   a. God and not men
   b. the Zodiac, not Jesus
   c. men rather than God
   d. survival, not the Lord

3. God brings _______ those He plans to use.
   a. blessings to
   b. to higher ground
   c. low
   d. much sorrow to

4. Once we are broken, the Son of God can:
   a. never use us again
   b. put us back together again
   c. flow out through us to others
   d. tell us our ministries are over

5. Sin is not our worst enemy; worse than sin is:
   a. time
   b. procrastination
   c. pleasure
   d. self

6. God’s goal in all things is to create within us:
   a. dependency upon Him
   b. needs
   c. wounds
   d. cynicism

7. Tares _______ the wheat.
   a. choke out
   b. destroy
   c. perfect the character of
   d. uproot

Chapter Seven: Brokenness Creates Openness
8. The wheat:
   a. does not blame others
   b. humbly forgives
   c. prays for the tares
   d. all the above

QUOTE:
“God’s goal in all things is to create within us dependency upon Him. We either come with brokenness or He will supply it.”
The Unshrunk Cloth

Just as our failures can break us, so God allows other situations to reduce us. I know, we think of ministry in terms of wholeness and expansion, but much of what is seen outwardly is attached to the work of God inwardly. In fact, one way we expand is to be willing to shrink. What do I mean? Listen to what Jesus taught:

“No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; otherwise the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear results.” —Mark 2:21

The Lord says that you cannot mend an old garment with a new patch because once the garment is washed the patch will begin to shrink. As a result, it will pull away from the garment and a worse tear occurs. I have seen it happen in many churches: someone is brought in to fix a situation, but they understand “ministry” as being an opportunity to display what they can do; they have yet to be cut to size. As a result, when they see the little hole God wants them to fill, as they reluctantly shrink, they pull away from the old garment, causing a worse tear than at first.

So, a wise seamstress will soak a new patch in hot water before sewing it onto the older garment. This gives time for the patch to shrink to the size...
that is needed. After it is shrunk, she then sews it permanently into the old garment.

The Lord must also shrink us before He can use us. When we come to a church or join a ministry team, we cannot help but be aware of the dozens of things we feel qualified to accomplish. In fact, we look at others and think, “I could do better than that.” If you are looking at the assignment someone else has and feel you could do better, it is because you are still, to some degree, unshrunk. God hasn’t brought you into the body to do someone else’s task; He wants you to focus upon your own, even if it is seemingly insignificant.

We argue, “But how will I advance unless someone sees my talents?” The Lord said, “He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much” (Luke 16:10). We must simply do the thing God tells us and not envy others and their tasks. We seek to do some great thing for God, but God wants us to do little things as though they were great. The entire ministry does not need repair, just the hole we are called to fill. Each ministry has an exact size requirement.

How does the Lord reduce you so you can be useful? Like the seamstress, He puts you in hot water. God must shrink us from our exaggerated opinion of ourselves before He can use us in greater projects. We must simply fill the size of the need before us without envying the tasks of others. If you find yourself, for a time, in hot water, it might be because you took on tasks that were beyond the Lord’s assignment for you. He is shrinking you to the size of your calling.

The end of it all is this: the Lord takes seriously His plan for our lives. He has one goal with us: create us in the image of Christ. In His wonderful, all-powerful hands, He can use our failures, “tare-able” people, and our time in hot water to work for both our good and His glory in our lives.
Let’s pray: Lord, shrink me to the right size for the task at hand. May I cover the need without ambition to be seen. Uproot hidden jealousies within me, lest I find myself striving to take the place of others. Amen.

—from the ICIT Weekly Mailer

SELF TEST, CHAPTER EIGHT
Remember, we are looking for answers that correspond with this training. Please write out your answers, allowing the Holy Spirit to provoke your thoughts. You may want to use them for group discussion. Note: we do not provide answers to questions you write out. To check your multiple choice answers, see answer key in the next session.

Chapter 8, Question #1: Why must a new cloth be shrunk before it is sewn into an old cloth?

1. Just as our failures can break us, so God allows other situations to:
   a. hurt us
   b. exalt us
   c. reduce us
   d. make us happy

2. A new patch must be ________ so that it does not pull away from the garment and a worse tear occur.
   a. dyed
   b. shrunk
   c. anointed
   d. prayed over

3. If we are looking at the assignment someone else has and feel we could do better, it is because we:
   a. are still, to some degree, unshrunk
   b. are the best
   c. can do everything better than others
   d. are quite significant

4. He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also:
   a. in all things
   b. to his church
   c. to man
   d. in much
5. We must simply do the thing God tells us and not envy:
   a. the greener grass
   b. a larger hole
   c. our pastor
   d. the tasks of others

6. The Lord has one goal with us:
   a. shrink us
   b. create us in the image of Christ
   c. clothe and feed us
   d. get us to Heaven when we die

QUOTE:
“The Lord said, ‘He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much’ (Luke 16:10). We must simply do the thing God tells us and not envy others and their tasks. We seek to do some great thing for God, but God wants us to do little things as though they were great.”